FORT FRAYNE

A NOVEL-By Capt, Charles King, AUTHOR OF "THE DESERTER," "A WAR-TIME WOOING," ETC.

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Just as first call for tattoo was sounding (no one having thought to tell the orderly trumpeter that, both on account of the holiday and the unexpected duty for the garrison, "rules were suspended") a long column of cavalry wound away through the shimmer of the snowy moonlight and disappeared from sight along the flats below the post. Fenton and Wayne, with four of the six troops, had ridden down stream for a ten-mile march. His object was to bring Big Road, with his little village, warriors, women, children, ponies, dogs, dirt and all, within the lines of the reservation of Fort Frayne. Once there even cowboys dare not molest them, and no self-appointed sheriff could impose his authority. With all Thorpe's bluster Fenton felt reasonably assured that even in so turbulent a corner of Wyoming the hustlers could not muster in force sufficient to warrant an attack that night. Big Road's braves were few in number, but they were fighters to a man. Their sins, like those of all their tribe and kindred tribes, had long since been forgiven them by Uncle Sam, and it was not for his vassals to keep up the feud. Rare indeed are the cases when the soldier has long cherished a grudge against the Indian. The Twelfth had fought like devils after the murder, as they could but regard it, of their beloved colonel, but when the opposing band had finally surrendered and accepted the situation all rancor had speedily died away.

It seemed to the regiment, therefore, a perfectly natural and obvious thing that it should hasten forth to protect this little remnant from the revenge of the whites. Laramie Pete, with all his faults, was a frontier hero whose popularity was second only to that of Thorpe, prospector would hasten to join forces under his leadership, and in twentyfour hours or less he could count on five hundred determined followers, fearless as they were reckless, and defiant of any law that was not of their own de-

In the selection of his troops Fenton had been governed by the time-honored tenets of the Twelfth. Leale's men, having returned but a month before from a four of detached service escorting a government survey through the lands of the Shoshones far to the west. were therefore the ones designated to remain in charge of the post, being supported by what was left of the so-called Indian troop-Crow Knife's company, a band of swarthy cavalrymen that took to Uncle Sam's clothing, pay and rations with avidity, and even to his drill and discipline so long as it was a new toy, but little by little the innate sloth and restlessness of the savage nature prevailed, and one after another, noncommissioned officer and private, the Sioux soldiery had been discharged until nearly all were gone. Of the dozen that remained, however, were some of the noblest specimens of the race, men who, like Crow Knife, seemed determined to rise above the apathy of the past into some position of power and influence for their people in the future, and it was almost unspeakable grief to these that they should be told that they could not go with the command. Yet Fenton's decision was a wise one. Ever since Big Road's messengers (White Wolf and Pretty Bear) had dashed into the garri-50n at 8 o'clock claiming the intercession of the Great Father's soldiers the excitement among the remnant of the Indian troop had been furious. For a moment it looked as though they might cast off their uniforms and, turning out In breechclout and paint and feathers, indulge in a genuine old-fashioned war dance on the parade. They were wild to get their arms and horses and gallop to the succor of their kinsmen down the valley, but the lieutenant commanding was a cool hand, and, aided by the persuasive talk of one or two old warriors. measurably quieted the disturbance. Then, as most of the men on guard begged to be allowed to go with their comrades, seven of the Indians were distributed among the three reliefs, and Leale's men filled all the other gaps. It was about 9:30, as has been said, when the column marched away. It might be back before Christmas night. It might moment could say, because even now Big march for the fastnesses of the mountains, uncertain what fate might be in store for them if he remained With the column went White Wolf and Bear, the former generally believed to be one of the four Indians engaged in the fracas that wound up in the earthly career of Laramie Pete. Ahead of the column, full gallop, with only a single orderly, but with instructions to tell Big Road and his people to stay just where they were, as the Great Father meant to come to their protection, went Lieutenant Warren, and the maddest, "miserablest" man in all the garrison

was Lieutenant Will Farrar. When a young fellow is full of soldierly ambition, when he knows he is master of his work and is eager for an opportunity to prove it, when everybody has been treating him as a boy and he knows he has all the ability of a man, when his sweetheart even has been teasing and twitting him, his apparent lack of consequence in the eyes of the garrison, and he is therefore all the more mad to prove at any hazard that it contains no more daring and spirited an officer, such an opportunity as was here afforded Will Farrar was not to be lost. He had implored Colonel Fenton to let him be the bearer of the message, and was broken hearted at the kind but firm refusal. "The Indian is peculiar, Will," said the old soldier gently. "He never forgets or forgives. If his father had been killed as yours was he would hold it something to be avenged, although resentment had to be concealed perhaps for years. They know you are his son. They know that the white men are leaguing now to avenge the death of Pete. They cannot understand such a thing as white soldiers, from sheer sense of duty and justice. interposing against their own kind to save the red man. In your coming they would read only treachery, and would argue that you came to urge their remaining so that we might join our white brethren in surrounding and wiping them out of existence. Whatever you urged, even in my name, they would be sure not to do. No, I must send Warren. They know him well and trust him." But Fenton was thankful he had so good an excuse, for even without it he could not have brought himself to send Marjorie Farrar's only remaining son upon a mission that might prove perilous-that would certainly seem perilous in her eyes. Hastening to the chaplain's as soon as

Thorpe made his melodramatic exit, Ormsby was met at the door by the good old dominie himself, and begged him to say to Mrs. Farrar that there was no cause for alarm. There had been a fight between Indians and cowboys several miles away and Colonel Fenton had decided to send a force out to keep the peace. She heard his voice, and faintly but eagerly asked that he should come in. It was Helen, not Ellis, who bore her message, Helen who noted with comfort and Ellis with mixed emotion that the mother had learned to lean upon this stanch and devoted friend. Mrs. Farrar took his hand and looked appealingly up into his face as he briefly told her what had happened and what the colonel had decided to do. "Will Willy have to go?" was her one question, and, ignorant as yet that

eale's troop would be designated to re-

main, Ormsby gravely answered that he presumed the entire command was or-dered out. "But," he added, reassuringly, "that fact in itself is the surest guarantee of peace. There can be no further disorder in face of so strong a

For all answer she bowed her head and hid it in her slender white hands. No wonder it seemed as though Christmas ever brought its tragedy to her at old Fort Frayne.

And then came diversion that was merciful. There was a rush of light footsteps, a flutter of silken skirts on the porch without, a bang at the door and in came Kitty, flushed, disheveled, tearful, indignant.

"What's this about Willy's going?" she demanded. "Where is he? What business has he? Why, he cannot go, Mrs. Farrar. He's engaged to me for the german to-morrow night." There was something so comical in her

utter inability to understand the gravity of the situation, to realize that a soldier's duty far outranked even so solemn a compact as an engagement to dance with his sweetheart that even Mrs. Farrar forgot her grief and apprehension for the moment and opened her arms to the imperious little lady and drew her to her heart.

"Ah, Kitty, you have the same lesson to learn that I had long years ago," she cried, as she sought to soothe and console the child, but Miss Ormsby was in no mood for petting. She was up in arms. She was being defrauded. Uncle Fenton had no business whatever to send Willy away on such a quest at such a time. It was worse than inconsiderate. It was outrageous, and then Mrs. Farrar's face went white again as she asked what Kitty meant, and then Kitty's nerve gave way and , she buried her bonny face on that motherly shoulder and burst into tears.

"I thought you'd heard," she sobbed "They have only just told me. Captain Farwell came home to change his dress, and I asked him where Will was, and he said he left him offering his services to Uncle Fenton to ride ahead to the Indians, and he wanted to know if I didn't think Will was a trump. I don't-I didn't-I think it's simply h-h-heartless

And then Mrs. Farrar raised her eyes and at the latter's call, from far and appealingly to Ormsby, and he went near, cowboy, ranchman, miner and without a word. He knew what she needed, and he hastened in search of Will. He found him at Fenton's, whither he had accompanied the Colonel, and where he was still pleading and tugging at his tiny mustache and tramping up and down and biting his nails, while Fenton, in the adjoining room, was calmly getting out of his dress clothes and into winter field garb.

"Would you mind dropping this and going down to the chaplain's and comforting your mother and my sister," said Ormsby as soon as he could get in

a word edgewise. "Yes, go, Will," said Fenton, "and tell her that there is nothing whatever in this affair to worry about. We're merely going to bring old Big Road up here to take Christmas dinner at the fort. There's no chance for a fight or you should go along. No, it's useless arguing, my boy. I'd do anything for you that's right, but this is absolutely unreasonable on your part. Now go and tell those two blessed women that you're to remain on guard over them and they'll rise up and call me blessed-at least they ought to."

And so finally Ormsby got the peppery young fellow out of the house and fairly started, Ormsby keeping pace with him as he strode excitedly from the

"I want you to do something for me,

hastened along. "I'm going with the command, and I haven't a moment to spare. Give this note to Mrs. Daunton for me as soon as possible after you reach the house. May I rely upon you?" And as he spoke he held forth an envelope evidently snugly filled, and Farrar took it mechanically and without reply. The boy was thinking only of his own disappointment. "Do you understand, Will?" persisted Ormsby. "It is of great importance that she should have it before 10 o'clock. You won't forget?" and, wondering now, Farrar

promised and Ormsby turned abruptly "I wish to the Lord I were in your place," was poor Will's parting shout as the guardsman hurried back to dress for the night ride. Already the four troops had marched to stables and were saddling. Already there were sounds of excitement over across the river and much scurrying through the straggling street of the cattle town of well-mounted ranchmen and cow punchers. Thorpe was as good as his word. He was rousing the county with a vengeance, hoping to ride down the valley in strong force business" before the cavalry could come to the rescue of the offending band, Will could hear the occasional whoop and yell that came ringing over on the still night air, and he was in a petulant mood, bordering on exasperation, when admitted at the chaplain's and ushered into the parlor, where Kitty still lay

She scrambled to her feet the instant he entered and began an energetic outburst, but the sight of his woe-begone face checked her suddenly. Mrs. Farrar read instantly the cause of his gloom, and her eyes brightened with re-"Willy, my boy, then you don't have

clasped in the mother's arms.

to go?

"Don't have to go!" was the wrathful answer. "Don't have to go! I've been on my knees to that stony-hearted old rip for the last ten minutes and he won't

"God bless him." were the mother's fervent words. "He knew-he well knew what it would cost me to have my only boy torn from me at this time." was the thought that flashed through her mind, and her eves welled with grateful tears, though she could say no more. It was Kitty who restored the social equilibrium. "I won't have you speak of Uncle Fenton in that disgraceful way. Mr. Farrar. You ought to be thankful you don't have to go, as you put it. Have you totally forgotten our engage-

ment for to-morrow night?" "Oh, for heaven's sake, Kitty. What is that at such a time as this? There won't be a sign of a dance unless they all get back in time, and I'd rather be dead than left here the first scout the regiment has after my joining it." He threw himself disgustedly into a chair, refusing to see his mother's outstretched hand, and for the time being absolutely indifferent to Kitty's reproaches. It was the discovery of this fact that taught her how thoroughly in earnest he was, taught her that there was something alive in his heart of which she might well be jealous, and for the first time in her life the girl stood a little in awe of him, and, relinquishing her purpose of upbraiding, she turned back, baffled and defeated, and took refuge by the mother's chair.

Mrs. Farrar, entreatingly. "Everybody but me-and Leale, They'll be off in ten minutes, too. Even Jack Ormsby goes, and I'm ordered-absolutely ordered-to stay here, as if I were some-some baby in arms unfit to do duty with my fellows. I'll never forgive Fenton as long as I live."

"Tell us who are to go, Willy," said

"And I'll never forget it," murmured the mother, as she gently checked Kitty, once more about to burst into impetuous speech. "I'm sure Colonel Fenton had grave and good reasons for keeping you here, my son, and if so tried and brave a soldier as Captain Leale can remain without reproach, surely you can."

"There's just the difference," answered Will, miserably. "Leale has been under fire and on trying duty time and again. His reputation was assured long years ago. I'm treated as a boy by-by everybody in this garrison, high or low, and forbidden a chance to do a thing. If you folks want to see that command off the sooner you get out to the bluff the better."

"But you are going to take us, Willy, said his sister, sympathetically. "Kitty over to her mother's side, bent down and kissed her, but the question was no sooner asked than she would gladly have recalled it-"or will you come home now with me?" she hastened to say. "I'll take mother home," said Will "Go on if you want to see them start, I don't. That's more than I could possibly stand. The chaplain will take you

gladly enough." And so at last did Miss Ormsby begin to realize that even in the eyes of the man she had captivated she was for the

time being of no account. It was one of Fenton's fads to have out the band when the regiment or any considerable detachment of it marched away, and now, even at night, he did not depart from his practice. The chaplain had opened the door to note the progress of the preparation across the parade. Orderlies with the horses of the officers were trotting past. The noncommissioned staff were already mounting at the adjutant's office, and over at the band barracks the gray chargers, the music stools of the musicians, were being led into line. A mounted band was something Kitty had never seen, and curiosity and coquetry combined led her to lend ear to the chaplain's suggestion that she should come out and see the column ride away and wave good-bye to her admirers among the subalterns. If Will persisted in his ill temper there was no sense in staying there, and perhaps the quickest way to bring him to terms was to manifest interest in his fellows. So, leaving him to the ministrations of his mother, she danced away to the front door, Ellis promptly following. The night was still and beautiful, softly hazy, and not very cold, and the scene across the snowcovered parade was full of life and animation. Lights were dancing to and fro among the company quarters. Two of Kitty looked bewil the designated troops had already Farrar who spoke. marched up from the stables, formed a line in front of their barracks, and, dismounting, were awaiting the sounding the squadron. Officers were mounting every moment along the row and trotting out to join their commands, and presently from the colonel's big house on the edge of the bluff came three horsemen clad in heavy winter field garb, and even in the dim light there was no difficulty in recognizing Fenton's soldierly form. These were joined by the adjutant as they rode out upon the parade, and then one of the group came jogging over towards the chaplain, followed by an attendant orderly. It down to the gate to meet him. "You and Aunt Lucretia will have to

keep house by yourselves to-night, little said he laughingly as he bent kiss her good-bye. "Corporal Rorke is to sleep at the house, so that you will not lack for guards. Where's Will?" "He's with his mother in the parlor, and just too miserable for anything,' said Kitty, who, now that she could see for herself the preparation for the march, began to feel far more sympathy for her lover, if not actually to wish that she were a man and could go too. Ellis, quick to notice Ormsby's coming, had slipped back within the hall and partially closed the door. Glancing over her shoulder, she could see that her mother had left her reclining chair and was bending fondly over Will, smoothing his tumbled hair and striving to soothe and comfort him, but it was evident that Will was sorely hurt, for he turned away in irrepressible chagrin and distress and covered his face with his hands. Helen Daunton, forgetful for the moment of her own bitter trouble, had sought to aid her friend in consoling the boy, but it was her first experience in such a case. She had never realized what it meant to a proud and ambitious young soldier to be held in garrison when his comrades were being sent to the field, and finding presently that she could be of little aid she drew away toward the window to join the chaplain and his wife, who were gazing out upon the parade, when the stirring notes of adjutant's call came trilling

himself face downward upon the sofa, utterly refusing to be comforted. "Come," said the chaplain in a low tone. "They will be better left to themselves. Let us go out and see the troops form line," and hastily quitting the parlor they came suddenly upon Ellis lingering at the outer door. "Mr. Ormsby was saying good-bye to Kitty," she nervously explained, "and I remained here for a moment. He is still

through the hazy moonlight, and with

a groan that seemed to rise from the

depths of his heart poor Will threw

Yes, still there, although he had said adieu to his little sister and the squadron was rapidly forming on the parade. Still there and looking now and then beyond Kitty's pretty, pathetic little face, clouded with a trouble altogether new to it. Still there, and longing for a sight of the face he loved as he did no other, despite all its coldness and aversion. Then they came hurrying forththe old dominie and his faithful help meet-the two young and beautiful women, and at sight of them Ormsby suddenly dismounted, and, passing the reins to his orderly, ran nimbly up the steps and extended his hand. "Good night, Chaplain-good night, Mrs. Ransom. We count on eating our Christmas dinner here despite the night march Good night, Miss Farrar," he added, gravely, gently. "We still hope to be here to wish you merry Christmas, Please extend my sympathies to Will. I know how hard it is for him to stay. Good night, Mrs. F- Mrs. Daunton,' he stumbled on, and extended to her the hand which he had withheld from Ellis "Oh, pardon me. Did Farrar give you

a note I intrusted to him for you?"

"Not yet, Mr. Ormsby. He has hardly thought of anything but his grief at being retained here." "Well, ask him for it before 10 o'clock. It"-and he was halting painfully now, for Ellis, withdrawing a pace from the group, was gazing straight into his face-"it-it explains itself. You'll understand it. Good night. Good night, all. I must hurry." And with that he ran down the steps and out of the gate. mounted quickly, and, without a backward glance, rode briskly away to take his place by the colonel's side. Another moment and the adjutant, galloping out in front of the long line of horses, had presented the squadron to Major Wayne. and that distinguished officer, unexpectedly awake and lively, lost no time in preliminaries, but broke his command at once into column of fours, and with the band playing its joyous march music, and with old Fenton himself in the lead, away they went down the winding road to the flats to the east, Once out of the garrison the band wheeled out of column and played the troopers by, then trotted back to unsaddle for the night. Men, women and children, the populace of Fort Frayne gathered along the eastern edge of the plateau and silently, and in not a few cases tearfully, watched the column out of sight in the dim, ghostly light, and then little Trumpeter Meinecke came out from the guard house and trilled the martial curfew that sent them shivering homeward-an ominous Christmas eve

XII. Ten o'clock was called by the sentries, and no one came riding back from the column with later news. Almost as soon as the command had disappeared from view Mrs. Farrar had gone home. Helen, Ellis, Kitty and Will in close attendance, and there they were presently joined by Aunt Lucretia, whose volubility even calamity seemed powerless to check, and then, to the relief of all the

women, Captain Leale knocked and was

promptly admitted. "I am in search of my right-hand man," said he, with his bright, cordial smile. "They tell me he is playing Achilles and sulking in his tent, but I have work for him to do," and then once more did Kitty look remonstrance. for she could form no idea of work for him that did not involve deprivation for

"You are not going to send Mr. Farrar away after all?" she began, but Leale laughingly checked her. "Far from it," said he. "I need him

come in. The chances are that the Colonel will have to arrest not a few of those fellows, and he'll do it in the interest of peace and good order, despite the fact that he has no warrant. Are

"I'm ready and willing to do any duty. Captain Leale," answered Will, ruefully, "But I was the first to volunteer for that courier ride to Big Road, and I think the Colonel ought to have given it to me. I'll be officer of the guard tomorrow, anyhow, and would just as lief begin now. Shall I come at once?" "Yes. The second relief goes on in a few minutes, and you would better in-

you ready, sir?"

spect them. Everything is started right. You have a capital sergeant of the guard. I want the sentries on the north and east bluffs instructed to listen for all sounds from the east, and to keep close watch on that plant of Bunco Jim's. Watch every movement in that rowdy town over yonder, though I believe most of the populace has already ridden away at the bidding of the socalled cowboy king." . Will bent over and kissed his mother's

forehead. "I'll get my sword and go at once," said he, "and I'll be back as soon as I've made the rounds of the second relief. I suppose nobody here means to turn in for an hour yet. We ought to have news of some kind before midnight." With that he quickly left the little parlor, and, vaulting the low fence, let himself in at his own door in the adjoining bachelor roost. Mrs. Daunton. who had been occupying herself close to Mrs. Farrar, presently arose, stepped into the hallway, took a heavy wrap and noiselessly quitted the house. Surprised. Captain Leale looked about him for explanation. Ellis had drawn aside the curtain and, with pale, set face, was gazing fixedly out upon the parade. Kitty looked bewildered. It was Mrs.

"This has been a trying day for Helen. She is not strong, I fear, and to-night she is so nervous and unstrung that she of adjutant's call and the formation of seems to shrink from company or conversation. I have never known her so distrait. I fancy she wants to be alone a few minutes and to take the fresh air

a word. She could see that so far from

having stopped on the gallery, Helen

Daunton had hastened through the gate,

on the gallery.' Ellis moved impatiently, but said not

and, turning to Will's quarters next door, was there awaiting his reappearance. The boy came out in a moment, his sword at his side, and, wrapping his cloak about him, stopped short in eviwas Jack Ormsby, and Kitty fluttered | dent surprise at sight of Mrs. Daunton. Ellis well understood the purport of the conversation that ensued, though she could hear no word. Will searched one the house, came forth again in less than a minute, handed a square white envelope to Mrs. Daunton, and, raising his forage cap in farewell, hastened away across the parade. Ashamed of her espionage, yet fascinated, Ellis lingered at the window and saw Helen tear open the envelope and draw forth a little packet or roll, which she closely inspected and rapidly counted over. Money! Treasury notes beyond question! Money, and pard her by Jack Ormsby! Ellis dropped the curtain and turned away. She cared to see no more. Over at the guardhouse the second relief was being formed as Farrar reached the spot-seven soldiers in their fur caps and gloves and heavy winter overcoats and arctics. The corporal had just reported them all present, and the lieutenant quickly yet closely inspected their equipment, then stepped to the

> "In addition to the usual orders," said he. "Nos. 6 and 7 are cautioned to keep a sharp lookout and to listen attentively for anything at the eastward. In the event of any unusual sight or sound call for the corporal at once. Who is No. 5?" "Graice, sir," said the corporal.

The young officer's face darkened a bit. He had no trust in the man whatever and knew well his evil reputation. "Graice," said he, "you have double functions to-night. You have not only the same orders as six and seven, but the commanding officer directs that you keep a special watch over the settlement across the river, particularly of the plant of Bunco Jim. I believe you

"There are plenty of others that know it as well," was the surly and unex-"That will do, sir," was the stern rejoinder. "You were asked no question, and will keep silent until you are. Do you understand your instructions?"

"Answer my question, Graice," said Will, tingling with indignation, but keeping his temper. There was a moment's silence, then-

"I am not deaf," was the sullen re-

"I 'spose I do." "There appears to be some doubt, however," said Farrar, coolly. "Post your relief, corporal, and we will look further after No. 5. Has that man been drinking again?" he turned and asked the silent sergeant as the relief marched

"It's hard to say, sir. He's one of those steady soakers. It would be difficult to find him when he hadn't been drinking more or less. I think he has been drinking all day, but he knows what he's doing, and is as sober as he is at any other time." Farrar gazed doubtfully after the re-

lief as it trudged away through the misty moonlight, shook his head in some dissatisfaction, then turned in at the doorway of the tower. "I will look over the guard room and

cells," said he, "and visit sentries later," and, taking up his lantern, the sergeant followed. A big stove burned brightly in the

center of the guard room, and the men of the third relief, sitting or sprawling about, sprang up and stood to atten-tion as the officer looked in. Another stove, the mate to it, was burning almost at red heat in the general prison room across the hall. Here were confined some half dozen poor devils, the scapegraces of the command, some drink sodden and stupid, others merely reckless and "ne'er do weel." Following the spirit of holiday decoration, and never expecting the visit of an officer that night, one of the number, with a fine sense of humor, had induced a comrade to fetch him a parcel from the barracks, and now on the bare wooden wall opposite the entrance there hung a chromo with the flowery border and the plous sentiment, "God bless our happy home." Will's eye caught it at the instant. "Take that down," said he, with manifest indignation. "There is to be no burlesque business here to-night.' There was a faint odor of dead tobacco about the grimy room. "You'll have to search those men and that room," said he to the sergeant as they turned away. "There must be neither pipes, matches nor anything with which they can start a fire. If this old rookery ever flames it will go like a flash. Do it at once. Any men in the cells?" "None, sir, and none in the other prison room.' "Keep the other empty then. The

chances are it'll be filled to-morrow when the column gets back. Remember the orders about fire. "No man's like to forget that, Lieutenant, with the powder stored there on the second floor.' "I know," answered Will, gravely. "How much powder is there there?" "Only, a dozen cartridges for the

reveille gun, sir; but that's enough to blow the place into flinders." "There's no one in the light prison room on that floor?" "No one, sir. That floor is empty. There's no fire up there at all." Presently the tramp, tramp of martial feet was heard on the crunching snow, and officer and sergeant both stepped

forth to receive the relief of sentries just taken off post. One of them was Crow Knife. He gravely saluted as he passed his officer and placed his carbine in the arm rack, then went out on the east side of the little building and stood there, silent, listening for sounds from the distant east. "May I have the Lieutenant's permission to go out on the bluff awhile?" he asked as Farrar came by him. "I can

have said no, saw the anxiety in the Indian's face and consented. "Crow is strangely superstitious," said ment. Do you care to go, mother dear?" at the guard house and mean to put him she asked, anxiously, and then, crossing in charge of the prisoners when they came on guard. He says the ghost dogs was the brief, stern order as they lifted you realize the position that Japan is in."

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hear the call of the corporal if we are

wanted for anything, and I am very anxious." And Will, who at first would

were howling the death song last night, and that somebody's to get his death blow to-night. We can't laugh him out

Will turned away and watched the rapidly retreating form, growing dimmer every second. "I suppose he dreads trouble for his people, and this row makes him nervous," said he. "I'm going the rounds now, sergeant, and will leave you here in charge." "It is just 10:30 now, sir. Shall we call

"Aye, aye, let it go." was the answer, as the young fellow stalked away in the direction of the stables. It was his purpose to take the sentry posts in inverse order, so as to visit first those on the

eastern flank. Without a break the watchery went from man to man, No. 5 shouting a gruff, stentorian "All's well" that again directed the attention of the officer of the guard to his probable condition. The last sentry had called off and No. 1 had given, loud and prolonged, the final assurance that all along the chain was peace and security before Will reached the bottom of the slope and began his examination of the stables and corrals. The last thing he saw as he cast a backward glance northward along the snowy slope that terminated the plateau on its eastern side was the solitary figure of Crow Knife standing mute, motionless and attentive just at the upper end of the post of the sentry on No. 6.

He was delayed unexpectedly among the stables, for one of the orderlies, in the absence of his troop and officers. had gone visiting among his associates in the adjoining building, and one or two spare horses were loose and roaming about the gangway. The next thing he heard of his sentries there were excited shouts for the corporal of the guard, and, hastening out into the night to ascertain the cause, he nearly collided with little Meinecke, the trumpeter. "Lieutenant," cried the boy, breath-lessly, "Crow Knife's killed, sir. Stabbed to death!"

"My God!" moaned Will, as he

hastened up the slope. "There's a curse on Christmas tide at old Fort Frayne." When ten, twenty minutes had passed away and Helen Daunton failed to return Mrs. Farrar had become anxious and ill at ease. Leale, too, had been listening eagerly for her step on the porch without, and, unable to control his longing to see and speak with her despite her palpable efforts to avoi him, he had early taken his leave and gone forth in search. Ellis, slipping from the parlor into the dining room, had thence managed to go to her own little chamber for a moment or two to to the justice of her suspicions up dinner time that evening, it was banished now and her heart was hard against Ormsby that he should have so braved and deceived her. Looking out from her window she could see much of the walk in front of officer's row, but not a sign of Helen Daunton. The clouds had thickened, the moonlight had grown dimmer all of a sudden. Once more the snow was sifting down. . She could not dream where Helen had gone. It was a desperate woman who stole

silently out of the little army home and

intercepted Lieutenant Farrar at the gate. In a few words she made known Ormsby had placed in his hand, and Will for the first time remembered it. He had stowed it in the pocket of the overcoat he was wearing as he returned with Ormsby from the Colonel's, and was compelled to run back indoors again to find it. Absorbed though he was in his own trouble, Will could not but remark how strange it seemed that his mother's companion should be seeking and Ormsby sending those mysterious notes at night. He made such explanation and excuse as he could, however, then hurried away. With nervous fingers Helen counted over the money in the envelope. Two hundred dollars! Ormsby was indeed generous. Then, desperate, determined, thoughtless of the military crime she was about to urge upon her husband, thinking only of the dreadful menace his presence was to the friends who had harbored and sheltered her, she sped away up the row, and, turning through the broad open space near the Colonel's quarters, came out upon the snow-covered brow of the heights overhanging the silent, ice-bound stream, and there, barely a hundred feet away, the dim outlines of that huge, hulking figure could be seen. She knew it only too well-knew it at a glance. Graice was standing on post at the moment, listening, apparently, to some faint, distant sounds of maudlin revelry that rose from the unhallowed walls of Bunco Jim's beyond the Platte. With one brief muttered prayer to heaven for guidance and strength, she sped across the snowy expanse and was at his side before he could either halt

or challenge. He never had time to speak before impetuously she began: "Royle Farrar, I must speak to you here and now. If your being here meant only danger and harm to me you might do your worst and I would bear it. You are here under a false name. Your life has so changed you that as yet no one has recognized you, but it cannot last, and then there will be bitter shame and, perhaps, death that would lie at your door-your mother's; your poor, gentle mother, Royle, who holds her life only through the belief that you are no longer alive to bring further disgrace to your

father's name." But now he had partially recovered himself and angrily interrupted: "Is it my fault I'm here? Did I suppose of all cursed places they'd send me to it would be here, to be ordered about b my cub of a brother, to see my noble Captain making love to my-"

"You dare not say it!" she cried. "You've had some experience of what I dare, my lady, and one thing I dare and mean to do is to stick it out right here and take my chances at Frayne. There's no other post where I'd find so many friends et court if things go

"You shall not stay here if I have to buy you to go," she cried, but she shrank even as she spoke, as though dreading a blow, for, with uplifted hand, he sprang to her side; then roughly, savagely seized her slender wrist. "Who are you to pose as guardian angel of the Farrars? Who are you to say shall to me? Do you realize, my love, that your place in the army is not in officers' quarters, but down yonder

in laundress' alley? By the Lord, I've a mind-" But here a dark shadow fell between him and the slender, writhing object of his brutal rage; an iron grasp was laid in turn on the hand that so cruelly crushed the white wrist. A deep voice, eloquent with wrath, controlled, vet boiling, seemed to ring in his ears the two words, "Let go!" and then releasing perforce his hold on the shrinking. startled woman, Graice writhed in furious effort to free himself from the clinch of Malcolm Leale, and writhed in

"You've the devil's own grip," he savagely hissed through his grinding teeth. "I've a grip, my man, that won't loosen till you are past doing further mischief here," was the stern, relentless answer. Then, uplifting his voice, Leale shouted for the corporal of the guard. and at the instant the cry went echoing over the posts of six and seven. The sentry still writhed in impotent rage. Finding his struggles futile, he once

more lashed with his tongue. "Don't be too sure of that, Captain. There are some kinds of a hold even your grip can't loosen.' "No insolence. You go from here to the guardhouse, as it is." "D-n the guardhouse and you, too," raged the soldier, hurling down his

carbine. "If I'm to spend Christmas in limbo. I'm cursed if you shall spend it making love to my-" and here, with a tigerlike bound, his free hand brandishing a glistening knife, he lunged at the officer's throat. A lithe form had come leaping like a pather up the path, and even before Helen's cry had died away Crow Knife had hurled himself between the men, and the shining blade was buried out of sight. There was a moment of furious struggle, and then the sentry lay felled like an ox in his tracks and Leale's foot was at his throat. The knife, blood-stained, had dropped in the snow. The Indian, his hand pressed to his side, was swaying slowly back as the sergeant of the guard, with a brace

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Graice, stunned and sodden, to his feet. Then the Captain turned to Crow Knife. "Did that crazy brute strike you? Are you hurt?" he asked, in deep concern. "Captain," said the Indian, slowly,

"I believe I'm killed." Leale sprang to support him. Other men, running to the scene, linked their hands and made a chair and raised the poor fellow from the ground. "Carry him gently to the hospital, lads. I'll be with you in a moment," said Leale, and then he turned to where, tremoling, terrified. Helen Daunton still stood as

though powerless to move. "Helen-Mrs. Daunton, first let me see you home. I ask no confidence, no explanation, but this is something in which I must help you. I have guessed the truth, have I not? That man is

your brother?" "My brother, Captain Leale? God pity me-that man is my husban'l!" For a moment not another word was spoken. Leale had recoiled, staggered as though struck a mortal blow. Then, in hoarse whisper, so choked and broken

seemed his voice: "Your husband! Your husband, Helen? Oh, my God! And I had thought

you free to be loved, as I have learned -as you have taught me-to love you. "Captain Leale," she cried, "in pity say you do not believe that. Oh, hear me! in his misery he had averted his face. "You shall not think me so vile," she went on, desperately. "I never knew until to-day that you had learned tocare for me. I thought all that had gone with my youth-oh, so long ago. I only asked of life a place where I could be useful and safe, and where, by and by, perhaps, I could forget. I have seemed to myself so old and dull and sad, so different from the women men love that I never dreamed it my duty to say I was not free. Oh, I thought you were my friend. My heart has been so heavy and so numbed l have thought it dead since that Christmas eve four years ago. Ah, let me tell it to you and you will understand. Four years ago this night my little sick baby woke and wailed with pain. That manmy husband-was in a drunken sleep on the floor. The baby's cry woke him. He swore a dreadful oath at the little weak, white thing in my arms and struck it hard across the mouth. I don't know what wild words I said to my husband, but I told him I would never see his face again. Then I caught my baby to my breast and I ran and ran through the cold Christmas streets, and the stars went out, and the lights went out in the houses, and the little baby on my breast grew heavier and heavier, and by and by it was dawn, and, oh, so cruelly cold, and I-I opened the shawl and saw-" Here, overcome by the recollection, the poor woman covered her face in her hands and burst into wild sobbing. And then the Captain turned. "Helen,

Helen, my poor, poor girl. Hush. spoke like a brute, but I was hit hard-God knows I was hit hard. I was your friend-I am your friend and will be so to the end. It is late. You must go in. Take my cloak; you are shivering." With that he turned and led her to the angle by the Colonel's quarters, and there she looked up one instant into his sorrow-stricken face. "Do not come further with me," she implored. "You have been so good to me," and, bowing to her will, he let her go and stood, following her swiftly retreating form with his longing eyes. And then, soft and sweet and clear, as though rising above all surrounding of crime or sin or sorrow, there floated on the night the prolonged notes of the cavalry trumpet sounding the soldier lullaby-"lights

"Lights out," murmured Leale, "Lights out-ah, God help me-for life and love it is, indeed, lights out." (To be continued next Sunday.)

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"I licked him," said the boy mournfully.
"I licked him good, an' now there are a couple of big fellows in the next street jest a-layin' fer me to lick me 'cause I "My son," said the father earnestly, see-

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